Forces. The amount for which the contracts/schemes have been finalized is Rs. 179.09 crore.

Appointment of chief of defence staff

29. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what decision, if any, has been taken on the recommendation of the Kargil committee for appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff, for better integration of the defence forces; and

(b) the reasons for delay in implementing the same and the steps being taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Group of Ministers (GoM) in their Report on "Reforming the National Security System", *inter alia* recommended the establishment of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The recommendations made in the Report of the GoM were approved by the Government on May 11,2001 with modification that a view on the recommendation relating to the institution of the CDS will be taken after consultation with political parties. While a decision on the institution of Chief of Defence Staff has not been taken in view of the complexities and sensitivities involved, a number of institutions like Integrated Defence Staff, Tri-Service bodies like the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Strategic Forces Command and the Andaman & Nicobar Theatre Command have been established to achieve the basic objectives behind the establishment of the Chief of Defence Staff. Further discussions including a detailed examination of pros and cons of the proposal are considered necessary before the formulation of Government's views on the subject. A decision regarding appointment of the CDS can be taken only after wider consultation with various political parties.

Instruction for making available defence helicopters

30. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested Union Government to issue necessary instructions to the Flag Officers (Eastern Naval Command), Vishakhapatnam and Indian Air Force Base, Hyderabad